

# Lecture 3

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# Why conversation fails (Cont.)

- Structure
- Behavior

# Why conversation fails

- Conversation fails because of failure to make one of its four components right
  - context
  - relationship
  - **structure**
  - behavior

# Setting a structure

- Many of our conversations are a mess.
  - We rush.
  - We wander from point to point.
  - We repeat ourselves.
  - We get stuck in a groove
- Some conversations proceed in parallel, with each of us telling our own story or making our own points with no reference to what the other person is saying.
- If conversation is a verbal dance, we often find ourselves trying to dance two different dances at the same time, or treading on each other's toes.

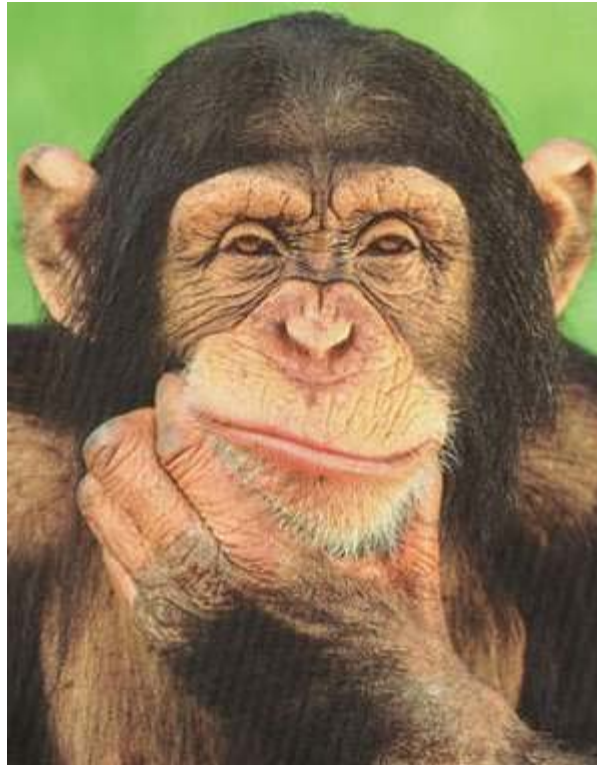
# Setting a structure



- Why should we worry about the structure of our conversations?
- After all, conversations are supposed to be living and flexible. Wouldn't a structure make our conversation too rigid and uncomfortable?
- But all living organisms have structures. They cannot grow and develop healthily unless they conform to fundamental structuring principles.
- Conversations, too, have structural principles. We can develop the quality of our conversations by recognising these structures and making them even more sophisticated.

# Setting a structure

- The structure of a conversation derives from the way we think. We can think about thinking as a process in two stages.



# Setting a structure

- First-stage thinking allows us to recognize something because it fits into some preexisting mental pattern or idea.
- The result of first-stage thinking is that we translate reality into language.
- We name an object or an event; we turn a complicated physical process into an equation;
- we simplify a structure by drawing a diagram; we contain a landscape on a map.

# Setting a structure

- **Second-stage thinking** manipulates the language we have created to achieve a result.
- Having named something as, say, a cup, we can talk about it coherently. We can judge its effectiveness as a cup, its value to us, how we might use it or improve its design.



# Setting a structure

- Our conversations all follow this simple structure.
- We cannot talk about anything until we have named it. Conversely, how we name something determines the way we talk about it.
- The quality of our second-stage thinking depends directly on the quality of our first-stage thinking.

# Setting a structure

- We're very good at second-stage thinking. We have lots of experience in manipulating language.
- computers are very fast manipulators of binary language.
- We aren't nearly so good at first-stage thinking.
- We mostly give names to things without thinking. The cup is obviously a cup; who would dream of calling it anything else?
- As a result, most of our conversations complete the first stage in a few seconds. We leap to judgement.
- Suppose we named the cup as a vase, or a trophy. Our second-stage thinking about that object would change radically

# Setting a structure

- An effective conversation manages structure by:
  - separating the two stages;
  - checking that we both know what stage we are in;
  - asking the questions appropriate to each stage.

# Setting a structure

## **Key factors: structure**

Each stage of the conversation includes key questions. Use these questions to develop your thinking in each stage.

### **First-stage thinking**

What do we want to achieve?  
What are we looking at?  
What might it mean?  
How else could we look at it?  
What else could we call it?  
How would someone else see it?  
What is it like?

### **Second-stage thinking**

What do we think about this?  
How do we evaluate it?  
What can we do?  
What opportunities are there?  
How useful is it?  
Why are we interested in this?  
How does this fit with our plans?  
What shall we do?

# Exercise

- Think about different first stage and second stage thinking question when we are taking about student union performance

# Why conversation fails

- Conversation fails because of failure to make one of its four components right
  - context
  - relationship
  - structure
  - **behavior**

# Managing behavior

- Conversations are never simply exchanges of words.
- There is a non-verbal language:
  - the music of our voice,
  - the gestures we use,
  - The way we move our eyes or hold our body,
  - the physical positions we adopt in relation to each other.
- We have less control over our non-verbal behavior than over the way we speak.
- Our nonverbal communication will sometimes say things to the other person that we don't intend them to know.

# Managing behavior

- Non-verbal communication is important because:
  - non-verbal messages communicate feelings – they are the primary way we express our emotions or instinctive reactions;
  - we see non-verbal messages as more reliable than verbal ones – they are less easy to fake;
  - it means that we always communicate – every kind of behavior in relation to the other person communicates something;
  - non-verbal messages relate strongly to verbal messages – they may reinforce, regulate, emphasise, contradict or substitute for, the words we use.



# Managing behavior

- Conversations often go wrong because we misinterpret nonverbal messages. There are four main reasons for this:
  - Non-verbal messages are ambiguous
    - No dictionary can accurately define them.
  - Non-verbal messages are continuous.
    - We can stop talking but we can't stop behaving!
    - Nonverbal communication is not structured
  - Non-verbal messages are multi-channel.
    - Everything is happening at once: eyes, hands, feet, body position
  - Non-verbal messages are culturally determined
    - Research suggests that a few non-verbal messages are universal

# Managing behavior

- Effective communicators manage their behaviour.
- Managing our behaviour simply means trying to act appropriately.
- The most important things to manage are eye contact and body movement.
- Simple actions like keeping your limbs and hands still, or looking steadily at the speaker while they are speaking, can make a big and immediate difference to the quality of the conversation.

# Managing behavior

## Key factors: managing behaviour

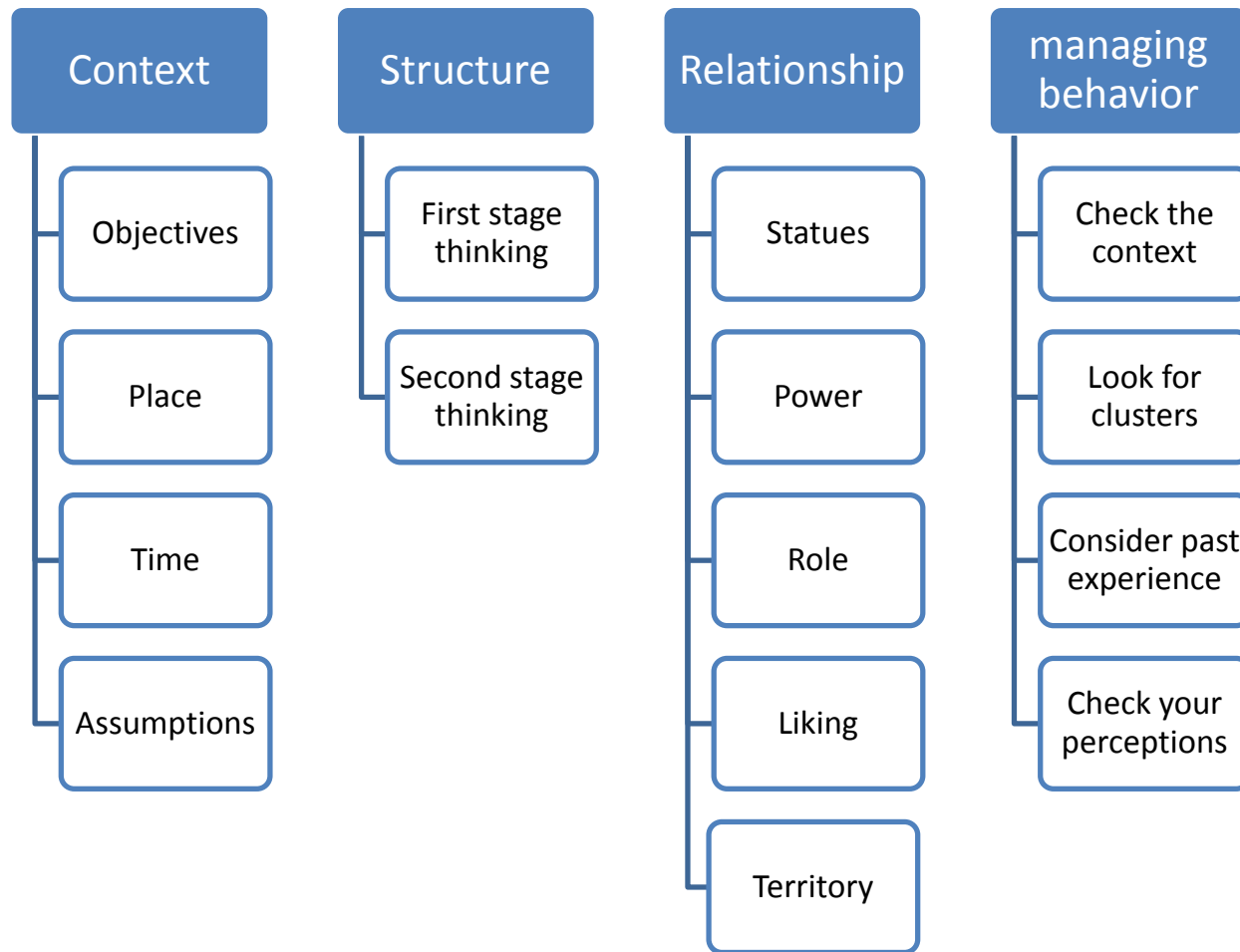
- **Check the context.** Don't try to interpret non-verbal messages in isolation from any others, or from the wider situation. Folded arms may mean that someone is hostile to your ideas, or that they are cold.
- **Look for clusters.** If you are picking up a group of non-verbal messages that seem to indicate a single feeling, you may be able to trust your interpretation more fully.
- **Consider past experience.** We can interpret more accurately the behaviour of people we know. We certainly notice changes in their behaviour. We also interpret patterns of behaviour over time more accurately than single instances.
- **Check your perceptions.** Ask questions. You are interpreting observed behaviour, not reading someone's mind. Check out what you observe and make sure that your interpretation is accurate.

# Managing behavior

- Ex.
  - List some body language moves that you know

NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR	INTERPRETATION
Brisk, erect walk	Confidence
Standing with hands on hips	Readiness, aggression
Sitting with legs crossed, foot kicking slightly	Boredom
Sitting, legs apart	Open, relaxed
Arms crossed on chest	Defensiveness
Walking with hands in pockets, shoulders hunched	Dejection
Hand to cheek	Evaluation, thinking
Touching, slightly rubbing nose	Rejection, doubt, lying
Rubbing the eye	Doubt, disbelief
Hands clasped behind back	Anger, frustration, apprehension
Locked ankles	Apprehension
Head resting in hand, eyes downcast	Boredom
Rubbing hands	Anticipation
Sitting with hands clasped behind head, legs crossed	Confidence, superiority
Open palm	Sincerity, openness, innocence
Pinching bridge of nose, eyes closed	Negative evaluation
Tapping or drumming fingers	Impatience
Steepling fingers	Authoritative
Patting/fondling hair	Lack of self-confidence; insecurity
Tilted head	Interest
Stroking chin	Trying to make a decision
Looking down, face turned away	Disbelief
Biting nails	Insecurity, nervousness
Pulling or tugging at ear	Indecision

# Why conversation fails



- Think of a conversation that went very bad and explain why

- لمياء زهران
- لمياء جمال
- مارلين رشد



- محمد علی
- ساهر
- محمد عنتر